

News Release



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Memorial Day Weekend Marks Start of Summer Fun

State Park Campsites Still Available, But Visitors Better Act Today

(**MEDIA NOTE:** California State Park Rangers will be available to answer media questions beginning at noon Friday, May 28, 2004 at the Granite Bay boat ramp at Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.)

SACRAMENTO – If high gas prices are driving you crazy, then drive the family to a State Park closer to home and cut the gas bill. For fun and economy this Memorial Day weekend, California's State Parks can't be beat.

Whether it's for a weekend or longer, camping at a California State Park campground has been called one of the best vacation deals around, with reasonable fees and plenty of picturesque scenery to enjoy. The parks are close to home and provide its many visitors a respite from the pressures of everyday life.

The upcoming Memorial Day weekend is the traditional kick-off for the summer camping and recreation season, the time when hundreds of thousands of campers find their campsites and make themselves at home in a private way at a public place.

But they are the campers who made reservations in advance. As always, the most popular campgrounds on the reservation system fill up fast and early.

But, don't despair. You may still get to pitch that tent.

According to State Parks' reservation system computers, there are a limited number of campsites that can be reserved for this weekend if people act quickly.

State Park officials cautioned that availability at any of the parks listed below can change daily, or even hourly. If you want to make a reservation, don't delay and do it now.

Parks With Availability May 28, 29 and 30:

**Anza Borrego Desert SP
Benbow Lake SRA
Col. Allensworth SHP
Del Norte Coast Redwoods SP**

Parks with one or two night stays May 28 or 30:

**Brannan Island SHP
Castle Crags SP
Caswell Memorial SP
Clear Lake SP
Colusa-Sacramento River SRA
Colusa-Sacramento River SRA
Donner Memorial SP
Folsom Lake SRA
Grizzly Creek Redwoods SP
Humboldt Redwoods SP
Jedediah Smith Redwoods SP
Malakoff Diggins SHP
Malibu Creek SP
McArthur-Burney Falls Mem. SP
McConnell SRA
Millerton Lake SRA**

**Morro Strand SB
Mt. Diablo SP
Mt. San Jacinto SP
Lake Oroville SRA
Lake Perris SRA
Richardson Grove SP
Salton Sea SRA
Salt Point SP
San Luis Reservoir SRA
Standish-Hickey SRA
Sugar Pine Pt. SP
Tahoe SRA
Turlock Lake SRA
Woodson Bridge SRA**

Telephone toll-free 800-444 PARK (7275) if you want to make a California State Park reservation, or go on line to www.parks.ca.gov

If you cannot find a reservation spot that you like, California State Parks also has first-come, first-served campsites. They include Plumas-Eureka State Park, Emma Wood State Beach and Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park. Further information can be found on the State Parks website listed above.

The Memorial Day weekend is the first big camping weekend of the summer season and one of the big three camping weekends of the entire year, along with July 4th and Labor Day weekends

No matter what your destination is or whether you have a reserved or a first-come, first-served site, it's always a good idea to call ahead and check on park conditions. And, while you're at it, the following are some helpful camping tips for year-round camping enjoyment:

- Determine where you want to camp and be flexible. Have alternate parks in mind in case your first choice is booked.

- Consider non-reservation sites. If the reservation sites are full, look for a first-come, first-served campground and try and arrive on a Wednesday or Thursday to maximize your chance to get a campsite. For information on first-come, first-served campgrounds call 1-800-777-0369.
- Consider less busy days. Sometimes reservations are easier to make if you can camp mid-week.
- Consider less popular camps. Southern coastal campgrounds can be full year-round. You may have better luck getting reservations at State Parks north of Santa Cruz or inland. Look for sites that are more remote, away from major metropolitan areas.
- Remember the holiday crush. The closer you try to make reservations to a holiday (Memorial Day weekend, Fourth of July, or Labor Day weekend), the further north and inland you may need to go.
- Consider cancellations. Check the Reserve America website, or call 1-800-444-7275. Cancellations are rare, but they do occur.
- If the campground you want is booked, consider a day visit to the park for a picnic, hike or other outdoor recreation.
- The "shoulder season" (April, May, September and October) is a good time to enjoy California State Parks. The weather during these months is usually good.

The annual State Park day-use pass, which is good for 12 months from the date purchased, is currently \$115 each. The pass will cost \$120 each beginning June 1, and \$125 beginning July 1. The annual pass provides access to more than 230 state parks.

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